

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Commissioner



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TO: Long-Term Care Facilities
FROM: Connecticut Department of Public Health Immunization Program
DATE: January 3, 2023
SUBJECT: New Initiative to Increase COVID-19 Vaccination among Older Adults in Long-term Care Settings

Dear Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs),

As we enter the winter months with increasing cases of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19, we need your help to encourage older adults, especially those living in long-term care (LTC) settings to receive the updated (bivalent) COVID-19 boosters. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC report](#)) showed that older adults continue to be at particularly high risk of dying of COVID-19 and the COVID-19 related death rate among unvaccinated people is consistently higher than those who are vaccinated.

[CDC data](#) on nursing homes showed that COVID-19 case rates are higher in nursing home residents who have not received all recommended doses than those who are up to date.

COVID-19 vaccination rates, as of December 11:

- 43% of nursing home residents in the United States are up to date with COVID-19 vaccination.
- 10% of nursing home staff in the United States are up to date with COVID-19 vaccination.

The updated (bivalent) COVID-19 boosters are the best protection against COVID-19 variants causing illness right now. CDC, Health and Human Services (HHS), and partner organizations are reducing barriers to vaccination for residents of LTCFs by providing flexibilities in vaccination administration and increasing communications.

Specific actions that LTCFs can take under this approach include:

- **Enrolling to become a COVID-19 vaccine sub-provider:** CDC is creating COVID-19 vaccine sub-provider agreements to allow LTCFs that are not directly enrolled as providers in the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program to access COVID-19 vaccine doses through enrolled pharmacy providers for direct administration by the LTC facilities to their residents and staff. LTCFs interested in this should work directly with their pharmacy partner and identify the [pharmacy partner](#) and enter the specific contact information when submitting this sub-provider agreement. See [Long Term Care Facilities Enrolling in CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program | CDC](#) for more information (NOTE: this program is not run by the State of Connecticut, but through CDC).



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- Additionally, LTCFs should note that if your facility enrolls as a COVID-19 vaccine sub-provider, then the responsibility to report COVID-19 vaccine doses administered will shift from the pharmacy provider to the LTCF. Doses must be reported within 48 hours of administration per Connecticut State law.
- LTCF are required by [state law](#) to report all vaccine doses administered electronically to [CT WiZ](#) within 48 hours of administration; this includes all vaccines (examples include influenza, pneumococcal, shingles, and COVID-19 vaccines), regardless of how vaccine is procured. See previous communication regarding provider compliance with the law [here](#).
- **Utilize single-dose COVID-19 vials from you LTC pharmacy partner**—HHS has approved the use of single-dose vials of bivalent Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for the core LTC pharmacy partners in order to improve access while maintaining safety and effectiveness of vaccine in the field. If your pharmacy partner does not have these please let us know here: <https://forms.office.com/g/fsp9nPiEtp>.
- **Communicate with LTCF residents and their families** – LTCFs can use this [template letter](#) that provides information about COVID-19 vaccination and language to communicate and promote the facility’s efforts to provide access to the vaccine (e.g., onsite vaccination or driving residents to a vaccination site).
- **Advocate for a strong and clear recommendation** from the patient’s healthcare provider to help increase the likelihood that a patient will agree to be vaccinated.

Thank you for all your continued efforts to increase vaccination among this critical population who are at great risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. If you have additional questions, please contact us at:

<https://portal.ct.gov/immunization/Contact-Us>.